

DIVORCE MASTER DO'S AND DON'TS

1. **DO** feel free to serve pretrial statements and other documents on the master via email.
NOTE: if serving Master Stern by email use the following email address:
bkruger@dauphinc.org.
2. If you have served the master by email, **DON'T** send paper copies.
3. **DO** respond promptly to Beth's emails regarding scheduling matters even if it is only to let her know that you are unable to reach your client.
4. **DON'T** ignore Beth's emails. Beth has been instructed that she may schedule a matter if she has not heard from an attorney within 72 hours of her email. She has not done so very often, but her patience might run out at some point.
5. **DO** consult with opposing counsel regarding any requests (e.g., continuance, rescheduling, need for a conference) and, if possible, obtain three dates acceptable to both of you and the parties; provide those dates to Beth who will contact the master and then notify you of the new date.
6. **DON'T** forget to check with your client before committing to a new date.
7. **DO** read the conference Memoranda carefully upon receipt to ensure that there are no errors regarding stipulations and/or discovery directives.
8. **DON'T** hesitate to, jointly with the other attorney, notify the master of any such errors.
9. **DO** be cognizant of the fact that the master's Memoranda are usually accompanied by *Per Curiam* Orders directing the parties to comply with the master's directives unless objections to said directives are filed and modified by the Court.
10. **DON'T** fail to comply with the discovery directives if you have not filed objections that the Court has sustained.
11. **DO** attempt to consult with opposing counsel and prepare a Joint Exhibit to include with your pretrial statements, setting forth, in chart form, the marital assets and liabilities and the party's respective positions. Such as the following:

ASSET	HUSBAND'S VALUE	WIFE'S VALUE	DIFFERENCE
TOTAL ASSETS			
DEBT	HUSBAND'S VALUE	WIFE'S VALUE	DIFFERENCE

TOTAL DEBTS			
NET ESTATE			

12. **DON'T** attach a cover sheet to your Inventory and call it your pretrial statement.
13. **DO** remember that stipulations reached in front of the master and memorialized by the master's memoranda are enforceable.
14. **DON'T** hesitate to reach as many stipulations as possible and, if not memorialized in a memorandum, place them on the record at the hearing.
15. **DO** ensure your clients provide testimony in regard to the equitable distribution and alimony factors.
16. **DON'T** forget that you are the attorney and should be making the decisions as to what should be presented.
17. **DO** remember that we do listen to the testimony and review the exhibits admitted on the record.
18. **DON'T** have your client read an entire document into the record (although he/she can certainly highlight the important part) and **DON'T** keep eliciting the same testimony because you want it highlighted (you will be given an opportunity to highlight its importance in your post hearing brief).
19. **DO** be professional and courteous to the other attorney.
20. **DON'T** allow your client's feelings for the opposing party dictate how you deal with the opposing attorney.
21. **DO** write a good brief. It should be succinct, clear and reflect the evidence adduced at hearing and cites to the transcript, appropriate case-law and statutes.
22. **DON'T** hesitate to offer a solution to difficult issues.
23. **DO REMEMBER THAT IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO SETTLE – NOBODY KNOWS THE FACTS AND THE PSYCHES OF THE PARTIES BETTER THAN YOU DO!!**

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF DAUPHIN COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

_____	:	No. _____
Plaintiff	:	
vs.	:	ACTION IN DIVORCE
_____	:	
Defendant	:	CIVIL ACTION - LAW

PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE PREPARATION SHEET

The master will be requesting the following information at the Preliminary Conference.

Parties

Plaintiff. Name:

Address:

Counsel: _____, Esquire

Year of Birth:

Employment: as _____ . Paid: _____ . Date Hired: _____ . Benefits:

Education:

Number of marriage:

Health:

Defendant. Name:

Address:

Counsel: _____, Esquire

Year of Birth:

Employment: as _____ . Paid: _____ . Date Hired: _____ . Benefits:

Education:

Number of marriage:

Health:

Children of this marriage: first name and year born.

Support:

Custody:

Basic Dates and Pleadings:

Date of Marriage (DOM):

Place of Marriage:

Date of Separation (DOS):

Date Complaint Filed:

Method of Service:
Proof of service filed:
Other pleadings:

Divorce Status.

Plaintiff's Consent filed: dated: Waiver filed:
Defendant's Consent filed: dated: Waiver filed:
Date Praecipe to Transmit Record filed:
Date of Order Approving Grounds for Divorce entered:
Plaintiff's 3301(d) Affidavit filed:
Defendant's Counter-Affidavit filed:
Date of Praecipe to Transmit Record filed:
Date of Order approving Grounds for Divorce entered:
Date of Bifurcation Order:
Date of Divorce Decree:

Assets/Discovery Requests:

1. Real estate.
2. Vehicles.
3. Stocks, bonds, securities, options.
4. Certificates of Deposit
5. Checking accounts, cash.
6. Savings accounts, money market and savings certificates.
7. Contents of safe deposit boxes
8. Trusts
9. Life insurance policies
10. Annuities
11. Gifts
12. Inheritances
13. Patents, copyrights, inventions, royalties

14. Personal property outside the home
15. Business
16. Employment termination benefits
17. Profit sharing plans
18. Pension plans (Defined Benefit).
19. Retirement plans, IRAs, 401(k)s, etc. (Defined Contribution).
20. Disability payments
21. Litigation claims
22. Military/VA benefits
23. Education benefits
24. Debts due from third parties
25. Household furnishings and other personalty.
26. Other

Discovery requests regarding income.

- a. Current income information:
- b. Complete tax returns plus year-end pay stub, W-2s, K-1s, 1098s, 1099s etc.
- c. CURRENT Social Security Earnings History and Estimated Benefits Statements.

Miscellaneous discovery requests: